

Wednesday, September 13 | 3:30 pm – 4:25 pm

Preconference: Marketing Leadership Track | Case Study

Amid Competition, Collaboration: How Law Firms Can Work Together to Achieve More

Body of Knowledge: Business of Law, Marketing Management & Leadership

Presenters

- Debbie Campbell | Communications Strategist, Holland & Hart LLP
- Matt Plavnick | Director of Client Development, Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell LLP

Session Overview

Even as law firms compete for clients and market share, there are valuable and meaningful ways to collaborate on shared priorities. This program explores a successful multi-firm collaboration that will inspire participants to seek out similar opportunities.

Case Study: In 2020, the five largest Denver-based law firms jointly launched the Denver Law Firm Coalition for Racial Equity.

- Three years in, Coalition firms co-host client events, support DEI-focused organizations, collaborate on marketing campaigns and collateral, and even travel together nationally to recruit diverse attorneys to Denver.
- Rather than compete over diverse talent, the five firms work together to sell Denver as the destination. The firms agree that everyone wins as Denver becomes more diverse.

The program will:

- Briefly present the Coalition's origins;
- Explore how the group navigates different firm cultures and politics to collaborate effectively;
- Highlight how marketers and recruiters work together across firms; and
- Identify key ingredients for success.

Breakout: Following the case study, participants will brainstorm possible collaborations in their firms and markets. Areas may include DEI but could also encompass technology, client service, community service, events, and more. Groups will record and share ideas to help participants think beyond their four walls and consider dynamic possibilities.

Session Notes

The panel highlighted the collaboration of five competitor law firms with the goal to increase the number of racially diverse attorneys in the Denver area. The coalition is called the Denver Law Firm Coalition for Racial Equity.

- Part 1 – Case Study on the coalition
- Part 2 – Group Discussion: Collaborative Opportunities

- Firms: Wheeler Trigg O’Donnell; Sherman & Howard; Holland & Hart’ David Graham & Stubbs; and Brownstein
- Rather than competing for those diverse attorneys, the focus was on creating Denver as a more diverse market as a whole. Help the attorneys who locate to Denver find pathways to stay.
- Coalition goal: Advance racial equity within members firms and Denver legal community. The coalition worked toward this by:
 - Knowledge sharing
 - Joint initiatives
 - Accountability

The coalition worked with national think tank Institute for the legal Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) in Denver and other community partners.

All came together fall of 2020 with firms, community leaders, in-house counsel, law school representatives, legislators, etc. Then each firm contributed 2 people to develop a marketing and communications team to develop the strategies and tactics to promote the goals of the coalition.